

INFORMATION REPORT

CONFIDENTIAL

COUNTRY Czechoslovakia

SUBJECT Lack of Public Enthusiasm at May Day Parade

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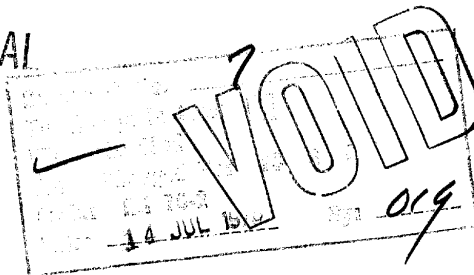
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1. It is reported from Prague that the preparations for this year's May Day celebrations were not carried out with as much precision as last year's, and even the celebrations themselves, which were supposed to emphasize the results of the five year post-war policy of the Krenlin, did not meet the expectations of the Communists. Although the functionaries of the Communist Party and the security officials succeeded in forcing many people onto the streets, the crowds failed to display sufficient enthusiasm, and the workers especially showed that they were forced to participate. Even expert cheer leaders, who had been brought to Prague for this purpose, did not help, and well-trained groups of "slogan shouters" were not of much use. Slogans created for mass consumption were not repeated with the expected conviction, and the parade sometimes resembled a procession. There was no spontaneous appeal and on the contrary lack of interest was apparent. This indifference was also indicated by the weak applause received by speakers, whose constantly reiterated phrases elicited only silence.
2. The attendance at this year's May Day parade was not larger than one-fifth of a normal Sokol Slet parade. This lack of interest was especially great in the country, and in some districts it might be said that the Communist May Day celebration was an expression of the defection of the persecuted Czech citizen.

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